

115.—WHY THE SIZE OF MESH IN MENHADEN SEINES SHOULD NOT BE RESTRICTED.**By DANIEL T. CHURCH.**

[From a letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

I do not believe that it is possible for man to make a perceptible decrease in sea fish. Hence we shall catch all we can of any size we can get hold of. By observation we know that, during ninety days of the year 1880, 30,000,000 barrels of menhaden were destroyed by bluefish and weakfish in Narragansett Bay, and in a tract of water only 12 miles long by 2 miles wide. As the total catch with purse seines is less than 3,000,000 barrels a year, it seems foolish to limit free fishing. If we are by law compelled to use 2½-inch seines, it is possible to stop every factory south of Montauk for years together. A large body of small menhaden are now on the coast, between Sandy Hook and the Delaware, giving us another illustration that fish go and come without any apparent cause. For the last three years the Virginians have been taking large amounts of small menhaden. Last fall we were in the Virginia waters fishing, and it was the universal testimony that there was then the largest crop of small menhaden ever known. I suppose this crop off the Delaware and Jersey is a part of the overflow, for, in my opinion, the Chesapeake Bay could not hold them after they had grown to full size.

From a selfish point of view, it would be for the interest of our firms to have the mesh restricted, and many fishermen have urged this upon me; but I have taken the opposite ground because I believe more menhaden are destroyed in one hour by fish than are destroyed by man in a year.

TIVERTON, R. I., *August 18, 1882.***116.—THE INJURIOUS EFFECT OF MENHADEN STEAMERS UPON THE FOOD FISHERIES.****By JOHN O. BABBITT.**

[From letter to Prof. S. F. Baird.]

Since the menhaden steamers have come into general use it gives those fishermen much advantage over the fish, with no law to protect the latter. It has nearly annihilated the fish from the coasts of Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. If the fishermen begin next spring where they left off on the Jersey coast, judging from the decrease of the past four years, there will be but few fish seen on the